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New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Bosah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Lieutenant General Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan; Major General Michael Lollesgaard, Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; and Major General Michael Finn, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its the agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to hold this meeting with all of our Force Commanders, taking advantage of this encounter that takes place every year. This is a great opportunity to spend the whole week discussing with our military colleagues all the challenges that they face. Let me very clear, Mr. President: every single one of our Force Commanders has a story to tell — of courage and determination, but also of challenges. Those stories are a reality for which we should be grateful to them, because of the attitude that they display with the support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and, in particular, the Office of Military Affairs. While each of them has a story to tell, we thought that this year it would be of particular interest to focus on three issues, which are so relevant to the situations that face us at the present time.

First, we will hear from Lieutenant General Yohannes Gebremeskel Tesfamariam, who, after being Force Commander in Abyei, is now performing the same duties in South Sudan, where he faces the tremendous challenges associated with the protection of civilians in situations that the Security Council knows too well. We will then hear from Major General Finn, who, as the Force Commander and Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, faces a context that has changed massively in what used to be a classic peacekeeping operation. However, in that aggravated situation, he faces the particular difficulty of the caveats imposed by troop-contributing countries. I think that is something useful that the Security Council could take into account.

Last but not least, we will hear from Major General Lollesgaard, who recently took command of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). That will draw attention to the issue of asymmetric threats, and the particular and very challenging environment that he experiences on a daily basis at the Mission. As members may remember, MINUSMA has experienced more casualties than any other operation in the past 20 years — which is quite revealing of modern-day peacekeeping.

I will say no more; each of the generals will make his points. Let me just take this opportunity to publicly thank them all very much once again for their commitment and their dedication to duties that have never been as difficult as they are nowadays.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Lieutenant General Tesfamariam.

Lieutenant General Tesfamariam: I am honoured to be here today to discuss the protection of civilians in South Sudan, the primary task entrusted to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Let me start by expressing my deep appreciation to the Mission's personnel, who, under the able leadership of Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS, continue to work courageously to protect tens of thousands of civilians under the threat of physical violence, safeguard human rights and facilitate the work of the humanitarian community in delivering assistance to the millions of South Sudanese in need. I particularly thank the troop- and police-contributing countries that have provided much-needed uniformed personnel and assets.

In a situation of ongoing conflict such as that in South Sudan, where the parties and allied forces pay little heed to the laws of war, peacekeepers struggle to implement their protection-of-civilians mandate. The challenges facing UNMISS are numerous.

First, restrictions imposed by the parties on access and the freedom of movement fundamentally hamper even our most basic efforts to protect civilians. Both

sides continue to violate the status of forces agreement, while obstructing or delaying the movement of contingent-owned equipment and demanding illegal access. Furthermore, those bearing the primary responsibility for protecting civilians are themselves perceived as constituting threats to the safety of civilians.

Secondly, as we saw last month in Upper Nile state, UNMISS protection-of-civilians sites have increasingly been caught up in the crossfire. During the fighting in Melut on 19 May, the Mission base was hit by more than 20 artillery shells and stray bullets. Nine internally displaced persons (IDPs) were killed and 11 wounded. UNMISS has been engaging the leadership on all sides, urging them to cease combat operations and respect the inviolability of United Nations premises. UNMISS troops have also been taking reinforcement and surge measures to protect civilians seeking shelter and have been allowing for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, we face the challenge to the Mission's efforts to protect vulnerable people, regardless of their location. Protecting civilians is not just about providing a secure static location, nor is it about demonstrating a static presence. Rather, our focus is on enabling the movement of civilians and proactively protecting them in their areas of origin, securing their traditional movements and enabling them to go about their livelihoods. The Mission has been projecting its presence outside its bases, conducting robust short- and long-duration patrols to deter violence against civilians, and proactively engaging vulnerable communities through the establishment of forward operating bases in Malakal, with plans to establish similar facilities in Bentiu and Bor, since the pull factor of our static protection sites cannot be ignored.

Some IDPs are encouraged to stay at the protection sites for an extended period of time because of the services provided. Since armed conflict broke out in December 2013, these sites have grown and continue to grow. There are now over 136,000 IDPs sheltering at seven protection-off-civilians sites. For many who have had no other choice than to seek protection, as well as for those who see them as access points for service delivery, the sites now provide a more convenient and secure place in which to live. We must assess the sustainability of this arrangement. Without a viable peace throughout the country, we must genuinely assess how long the Mission can, and should, provide protection to those currently inhabiting the sites.

Beyond those challenges, the successful implementation of the Mission's protection-of-civilians mandate requires effective command and control, steadfast commitment from the troops and sufficient resources. From a military standpoint, command and control is absolutely critical. The operational-level protection-of-civilians strategy must be delivered at the tactical level in contexts where days, and even weeks, can pass without direct contact between commanders and their subordinates. As peacekeepers in the field, the strategy is necessarily decentralized: the unit commanding officers have considerable freedom of action. As such, they are a key force enabler and a critical link in the protection-of-civilians chain. It is therefore essential that there be trust within the chain of command, as well as confidence that commanders' orders and intent are understood and will be implemented without fail.

The protection of civilians also presupposes a steadfast commitment to the safety and security of the people in one's area of operations. It is based on the understanding that those responsible for such protection are willing to take proactive measures and to put themselves between the threat and the civilians when required. Although an armoured unit may be technically capable of a military or police engagement, that technical capacity alone is not sufficient to protect civilians. I believe that willingness is a peacekeeping operation's greatest protection asset.

Lastly, the protection of civilians requires significant logistical, financial and human resources that fit the mandate, expectations and realities on the ground. The limitations that we face in that respect, particularly the absence of critical enablers such as close air support, adequate logistics, intelligence, reconnaissance and responsive casualty and medical evacuation capabilities, negatively affect our early warning and daily operations.

In conclusion, I should underline that the protection of civilians is a responsibility shared among key actors, including the international community and the host authorities. Success at the operational level depends upon well-trained and well-equipped troops who have the right mindset for deterring potential aggressors and reducing levels of violence. Passive forces invite aggression and manipulation, leading to increased

risks for all. Finally, successfully protecting civilians requires innovative leadership that translates into effective actions on the ground. The Security Council plays a key role in holding accountable those who harm civilians or directly obstruct our efforts to protect them.

The President: I thank Lieutenant General Tesfamariam for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Lollesgaard.

Major General Lollesgaard: It is a great honour to speak in this forum on the subject of operating in an asymmetric environment. As the Council is aware, I command the force of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and in answer to the question underlying the topic — whether or not MINUSMA is geared to operate in an asymmetric environment — I would say no, not really. I have some good assets, but overall there are some major shortfalls that make us extremely vulnerable.

Since Mali is often on the Council's agenda, I will not explain the threats and challenges in the country in detail. While we consider the Platform and the Coordination coalitions to consist of so-called compliant armed groups, it is primarily, but not only, the jihadist groups that are hostile to MINUSMA. Their preferred methods are improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide attacks, laying mines along our routes, ambushes and shelling our camps with rockets and mortars. The consequence is that MINUSMA has by far the most fatalities among United Nations mission troops, with 36 soldiers killed and more than 200 wounded since 2013, something that deeply concerns and upsets me.

We have a robust self-defence mandate for conducting peacekeeping in such an environment. However, we cannot, and should not, be mandated to conduct offensive operations against the threats we face. We are therefore limited to trying, mainly defensively, to protect the population and ourselves as well as we possibly can. In my opinion, that requires the ability to master three main functions. The first of those is understanding the environment — who, when, where, how and so on. Only through that understanding can we prevent attacks, either by influencing the leadership or deterring groups by being in the right spot. We also need strong situational awareness in order to monitor a ceasefire in such a vast country. Secondly, we have to reassure the population and convince them to believe in the possibility of a future without the armed groups. And while doing that, we must be able to protect ourselves.

It is with the first function, that of understanding, that we have the good news. In MINUSMA we have implemented a new intelligence concept — the All Sources Information Fusion Unit. In support of that I also have at my disposal special operations forces and helicopters. Accepting intelligence-gathering as an integrated function of our operations is a huge step forward in the United Nations modus operandi. I now have a number of sophisticated assets, including unmanned aerial vehicles, and a strong, centrally placed intelligence staff capable of doing the assessments. We have come a long way, and I am now definitely being provided with good, solid intelligence that helps me understand the environment. However, if we — the United Nations — continue to operate in such environments, we have to exploit that concept further. We need more intelligence-gathering assets at the lower levels and, most important, we need the staffing capacity to make better use of the intelligence. I am making a strong push for the full manning of all my headquarters with, importantly, the proper skills set. Intelligence is a priority.

The next function is reassuring and convincing the population. The best way to counter an asymmetric threat, of course, is to get the people's support. If the population believes in the alternative — in the peacekeeping force — they will be reluctant to support terrorists or other armed groups, including bandits, and eventually such groups could lose their hiding places. The Mission has a strong public information section that works effectively with the media, issuing communiqués, making radio news and so forth. But we need what I would call an information operation concept that combines all our messaging activities in a coordinated manner. Commanders and soldiers on the ground should talk and interact more closely with the population, talking about what we are doing, why we are there, what is going on and so forth. By combining those messages with quick-impact projects and other outreach activities, we will be able to create a positive perception of the force, and of what is an alternative to war, in a coordinated way. I am therefore happy to see that the first draft of MINUSMA's new mission concept actually mentions information operations. That is also why I have now established a small information operations cell in my planning section at force headquarters. We should exploit that concept further.

While working on understanding the environment, preventing attacks and convincing and reassuring the population — in a word, stabilizing the situation — we have to protect ourselves. Anything that moves by road in an environment as hostile as that in northern Mali has to be protected. That means protected against mines, and all units should be able to search for, detect and avoid mines and IEDs. It goes without saying that eight United Nations soldiers sitting in the open air on top of a soft Landcruiser pickup do not stand much of a chance if the vehicle is hit by a mine or IED. The same goes for unprotected civilian supply trucks. In short, we must make sure that any contingent operating in a hostile environment is well equipped with protected vehicles for troops operating outside the camps.

We should also provide well-protected camps with good living conditions, particularly when we set up camps in contested areas where troops conduct risky operations out of their camps on a daily basis. They need a safe haven to come home to. We can never achieve full protection against everything, but our troops deserve to be well protected in their camps against shelling or suicide-vehicle IEDs, which in Mali is unfortunately not always the case. However, I should add that we are working on improving that by, among other things, implementing new technology, an example of which is the indirect fire warning device. Soldiers also need access to proper accommodation, water, power sources and a basic level of welfare. I am aware that much of that is basically the responsibility of troop-contributing nations, one that I believe should be assessed and certified before the contingent is allowed to deploy. But to the extent that a unit does not bring those capacities into the Mission, I suppose it is only the United Nations that can help them.

Finally, I should mention that we need robust logistics. What do I mean by that? The proven United Nations system, whereby mission support delivers supplies using civilian contractors throughout the mission area, may work in certain well-established, low-threat missions. But it does not work in a hostile environment like that in Mali. To be very specific, north of the Niger River, the hostilities are so imminent and the road conditions are so poor that it is irresponsible to keep going there with old, fragile civilian trucks that are unprotected and driven by people who are not soldiers. That is one of the main reasons that we cannot sufficiently support our troops and our camps in the north. Therefore, we strongly need a military logistics unit to work in the most hostile parts of the country. It is not so important who commands the Mission support — whether it be the Force Commander — but the capacity is important. We also need the requisite aviation assets to help manage the burden of supplying distant bases, and we need contractors with the right equipment to be able to transport effectively along difficult supply routes, even in areas that are not highly contested.

Let me say a few words on training. It is of the utmost importance that United Nations forces be properly trained before deployment. Among the most important issues are patrolling, procedures and techniques, basic counter-IED capability, how to call for helicopters to evacuate casualties, the code of conduct and weapons training. There are other important skills as well, for instance, how to conduct crowd control. I say that because I have experienced that many of my troops are not good enough at those basic skills. I am sorry to say that I believe that we have suffered losses, because of insufficient predeployment training, that could have been avoided. The most important skill of all those mentioned is counter-IED training. Every single soldier needs to be able to search, detect and avoid IEDs and mines at a basic level. That training is quite simple to obtain. It does not require a very demanding training programme, and it will save lives. If we can manage to improve the predeployment training level, therefore, I will promise to maintain the skills of the troops once they have arrived in the Mission. If I did possess the envisaged mentor teams, the overall effectiveness of the Force would be enhanced.

To conclude, drawing on my personal experience from MINUSMA for a general recommendation, I am not in doubt that in future there will certainly be a continuous need for peacekeeping operations in asymmetric environments. I do not doubt that the United Nations will be called upon to establish those kinds of missions, because who else would? But if we want to be able to do it — and do it effectively — we need to be fully capable of facing that environment in all aspects. That means having the capability to face hostile armed groups hiding among the population and to face challenging climates, geography and infrastructure. To do that, we need to be properly trained. We need to be properly equipped with protected vehicles, to put a big effort into counter-IED and robust logistics, to protect the camps, to have proper intelligence, and we need to ensure that all staff posts are manned and manned with skilled officers. I know that sounds like a lot, but it is what we need if we want to be able to survive in an

asymmetric environment. I know well that to achieve it, we are demanding a lot from ourselves internally in the United Nations, for instance, from the Mission support, but also from the Member States paying the bill. I am also well aware that we are fully depending on troop-contributing nations providing the units that can do it.

Let me finish by assuring the Council that, under the circumstances, we are doing just OK in a way. While conducting operations, we work very hard in the Mission to improve capabilities and standards by stepping up our training efforts. New equipment is also coming in, and first and foremost, I am lucky that in general I have brave, robust, courageous soldiers who every day face the threat without shying away. But we need to prepare and support them better.

The President: I thank Major General Lollesgaard for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Major General Finn.

Major General Finn: It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be invited to speak today on the subject of caveats and impediments to command and performance. Since I was appointed Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), almost two years ago, the subject and effects of caveats imposed by many of the 25 troop-contributing countries (TCCs) have never been far from my attention. The UNTSO military component is made up of approximately 153 unarmed military observers. My key tasks as the Head of Mission for UNTSO are to assign well-trained military observers under the operational control of the Force Commanders of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Focusing on supports to the Force Commander of UNDOF has been provided by Observer Group Golan, tasked within UNDOF to observe and report violations in the area of separation, located east of the disengagement line between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan, and the areas of limitation on both sides of the disengagement line, the Alpha side in the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Bravo side in the Syrian-controlled Golan.

Since the outset of the conflict in Syria, and especially as it spread to the Golan, we have all faced legitimate concerns regarding the safety and security of our personnel, including the UNTSO unarmed military observers of Observer Group Golan. Unfortunately, while UNDOF, UNTSO, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have sought to improve security measures and reduce risks, several of our troop-contributing countries imposed national caveats that restrict where their observers could deploy. Caveats are a controversial subject, and their impact on United Nations missions has been much discussed. Indeed, they impose significant restrictions on multinational operations and often restrict the operational role and functions of individual national contingents or United Nations military observers employed on multinational missions such as UNTSO.

Returning to the work of UNTSO, the deterioration of the situation in Syria has led to a number of countries, as stated, imposing restrictions on the activities of their personnel assigned to Observer Group Golan on the Syrian-controlled side of the ceasefire, which I referred to as the Bravo side. At one stage in 2013, all except seven of our 25 TCCs had caveats of varying effects on their observers deployed in Observer Group Golan. It even reached a situation where, if one more troop-contributing country had imposed restrictions, UNTSO would have been unable to meet its commitment to provide professional, trained military observers to the Force Commander of UNDOF on the Bravo side of the area of separation.

To give an idea of the effect of caveats, when the Force Commander of UNDOF and I briefed our TCCs in April 2014, I mentioned that only six nations provided over 75 per cent of the observers deployed on the Bravo side — that is, on the Syrian-controlled Golan. Naturally, the situation posed an undue burden on those nations, including in terms of exposure to risk. The restrictions also affected performance in that they complicated my efforts to maintain the desirable mix of three observers of different nationalities in any observation post in order to ensure better impartial reporting as well as an appropriate mix of experienced and inexperienced officers in teams and in our observation posts. It also limited the flexibility to assign officers of those nations to other locations where UNTSO operates — at our headquarters in Jerusalem, at our liaison offices in Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo, or to Observer Group Lebanon, the operation within UNIFIL in south Lebanon.

Caveats imposed distinctions among military observers and the roles they perform, affecting the morale of individual observers. As the Secretary-

General has reiterated in his reports on UNDOF, those restrictions have hindered the implementation of UNDOF's mandate, and they limited the capacities and hampered the operational flexibility of Observer Group Golan, on whose skills UNDOF relied move heavily when the deteriorating situation required increased focus on static observation and reduced mobile activities.

I fully understand what drove the imposition of those restrictions, and I share the desire of troop-contributing countries to see the risks to their deployed personnel mitigated to the greatest extent possible. In peacekeeping missions, removing the threats of course rests ultimately with the parties to the conflict and with those with influence over them. But I worked closely with the Force Commander of UNDOF to carry out a range of mitigating measures, including improved medical evacuation and casualty evacuation capacities. We raised and reinforced perimeter fences and equipped observers with advanced night vision equipment with remote viewing to allow them to anticipate threats. Work continued right up until our eventual relocation from the area of separation by UNDOF in September 2014. We fitted our observation posts with ballistic skirts and bulletproof glass on the observation towers.

We reassured TCCs by emphasizing the tight coordination between the Force Commander of UNDOF and myself and by the provision of contingency planning that was, and still is, manifested by regular evacuation exercises and the deployment of security parties for the observation posts to either augment or replace unarmed observers, if required. That close coordination, reflecting the priority placed by the UNDOF Force Commander and myself on safety and security, was demonstrated as recently as last month, when heavy firing over the course of a week impacted one of our observation posts.

Under-Secretary-General Ladsous has continuously stressed the importance that his Department and all peacekeeping operations place on the safety and security of personnel in the field. He has emphasized that contributors' personnel are our most critical asset. Since September of last year, all UNTSO observers, as well as the majority of UNDOF personnel, have been relocated to the Israeli-occupied side of the ceasefire line, due to the security situation, as a further mitigation measure implemented by my colleague the Force Commander of UNDOF in conjunction with DPKO.

Yet seven countries — not counting the four permanent members of the Security Council — that contribute observers but whose military personnel are restricted by the Disengagement Agreement from serving on the Golan continue to impose caveats. While that has limited impact at the moment, the limitations on performance and flexibility will again come to the fore when a decision is eventually made to return to the Bravo side. When that might occur will be determined on the basis of very best assessments of the security conditions, which UNDOF, with our support and that of DPKO, is continually monitoring. Therefore, the removal of the remaining national caveats remains a priority issue.

A recent review of UNTSO led by DPKO highlighted the mitigation measures that have been implemented by UNDOF and UNTSO in respect to the operations and physical security of military observers in Observer Group Golan. The review recommended that UNTSO contributors with caveats should be strongly urged to lift them. It also recommended reducing the number of military personnel contributed to UNTSO by countries that continue to have restrictions on the deployment of their military personnel, increasing the contributions of those that do not have caveats and expanding the pool of UNTSO TCCs by inviting new contributors without caveats.

With the support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, some of those recommendations have been adopted, including the deployment of United Nations military observers from new TCCs and reducing the numbers of United Nations military observers from countries with national caveats. In addition, senior staff appointments or positions in the mission are being filled only by countries without caveats.

Caveats impact all United Nations peacekeeping missions, not just UNTSO. They restrict a commander's ability to exercise command and control and are an impediment to performance. I fully recognize the national interests that drive caveats, but I also see that caveats threaten to drive a wedge between contributing nations, also threatening United Nations peacekeeping and observer capabilities. It is welcome that the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations has made important recommendations in that regard.

Despite those challenges, the presence of United Nations peacekeepers on the Golan has played a key role in helping to prevent the Syrian conflict from

becoming a Syrian-Israeli conflict. Our well-trained observers continue to provide impartial and expert reports. I encourage contributors to UNTSO to continue to provide officers with the right profile and experience to match the challenges ahead.

I am grateful to all our TCCs for the support they continue to give to the work of peacekeepers during these challenging times. In particular, I extend my thanks to those nations that enable the deployment of their officers to all areas of UNTSO's area of operations, without restrictions.

The President: I thank Major-General Finn for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Malaysian presidency of the Security Council for convening this annual public debate on peacekeeping operations. I would also like to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Force Commanders of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) for their briefings. Finally, I welcome the presence of the other Force Commanders, including the Commander of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia, who join us today.

Chad would like to pay homage to the 123,560 members of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations currently under way around the world. Peacekeeping soldiers spare no effort to fulfil their mandates, despite inadequate resources and the difficulties of all kinds that they face, including the security environment that confronts them. I would like to make several additional observations.

With respect to the protection of civilians, Chad rejects the abusive use of the concept of using force against States without regard for their political and sovereign independence. A number of countries, particularly in Africa, continue to suffer from that situation.

We recognize that the presence of the United Nations in failed States or those that are about to become so, constitutes a guarantee of security for defenceless civilian populations that faces all manner of threats. Protection of civilians is an essential task that is part of the mandate of virtually all United Nations peacekeeping operations. That protection must also be a moral obligation. However, we must ensure that we have a common understanding of the concept at all levels, including strategic, operational and tactical ones. It is also important that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and regional organizations, especially the African Union, strive to elaborate and, if need be, reach agreement on the principles for the protection of civilians for their respective organizations.

Providing a peacekeeping operation with a mandate for the protection of civilians is insufficient unless that operation possesses the necessary human, logistical and material resources to discharge its mission. A number of operations are finding it very difficult to implement their mandates due to insufficient human, material and intelligence resources, as well as weak deployment in the main areas where tensions prevail. That is the case, for example, with UNMISS and with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, but it also applies to many others. In addition to providing a physical presence that enables them to protect thousands of civilians, as we have seen in South Sudan, the United Nations can and must do better by investing more in prevention and mobility. Nor should robust intervention to protect civilians be excluded. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the early warning and rapid intervention mechanism of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose effectiveness has been proved.

Today, the circumstances on the ground mean that we have to be proactive. We have to understand that when the United Nations is unable to carry on with the task expected of it, namely, to protect defenceless civilians, it will not avoid criticism, such as that levelled against it following the genocides in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Rwanda. In addition, peacekeeping operations — without undermining traditional principles such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in cases of legitimate self-defence or defence of the mandate — must undertake offensive operations when the situation so requires. That is important for disarming armed groups that are attacking and harassing civilians, as is unfortunately the case in a number of countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali.

Furthermore, pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, peacekeeping operations are authorized to utilize force to protect both the assets and staff of the United Nations. Therefore, when required, they have to use such force to prevent attacks against their facilities, soldiers and supply lines.

With regard to sexual violence and abuses against women and children, we wish to underscore the importance of increasing the number of female staff in peacekeeping operations, including in positions of responsibility. We wish to welcome the appointment of a woman, Major-General Kristin Lund, as Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, and we urge the Secretariat to appoint more women at similar levels of authority.

Concerning Mali and the asymmetric landscape in which the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is operating, the list established and updated by the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee in accordance with resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) indicates that there are 24 entities associated with Al-Qaida in Africa, including 7 that are active in Mali.

Given the realities on the ground, we wonder if MINUSMA is undertaking a fight against terrorism instead of peacekeeping. Moreover, MINUSMA's contingents do not have the training or the materiel, logistics or intelligence neceessary to tackle the current situation in northern Mali. It is urgent that States possessing the necessary capacities provide the resources just mentioned to troop- and police-contributing countries so that they will be capable of discharging their mandate. The credibility of the United Nations and the whole of the international community is at stake there.

The work carried out by the international forces and MINUSMA must be time-limited, because their mission is not to remain in Mali forever. Therefore, in keeping with the principle of national ownership, the focus should be on strengthening Mali's national defence and police forces, which bear the primary responsibility for the defence of the country. In addition, in terms of regional ownership, emphasis should be placed on the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region. The will of African States, especially those of the group of five Sahel States — Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad — is not lacking. The assistance of partners such as the United Nations could be decisive.

Moreover, trouble-makers and those who attack the United Nations must answer for their actions. Therefore, the Malian authorities should spare no effort to undertake investigations to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of attacks against MINUSMA, whether they be rebels or terrorists. We know it is very difficult to distinguish between a rebel and a terrorist in northern Mali. However, through intelligence work and strengthening of human intelligence-gathering within MINUSMA, we can assist Mali in achieving this and punish those who should be punished.

My country has paid a heavy price in Mali, but nothing can stem our resolve to continue to help this fraternal country. We are getting ready to deploy 335 additional soldiers and one constituted formed police unit there in the near future.

With regard to UNTSO, we welcome the work of the military observers and encourage them to continue to fulfil their mission of observation. We know that many troop-contributing countries are experiencing great difficulties when it comes to deploying their experts to certain areas because of security concerns. No doubt this has a considerable impact on the implementation of the mandate of the military observers. Peacekeeping is not a risk-free activity. Unfortunately, many countries contributing to peacekeeping are not ready to evolve and adapt to unforeseen and dangerous situations. We regret that attitude, which must change.

I would like to pay tribute to United Nations peacekeepers and to express my sympathy and condolences to the Governments and the families of those who have lost their lives during their mission.

I conclude by asking three questions directed at the Major-General Lollesgaard of MINUSMA. What do we need to do to improve the situation in northern Mali and to prevent asymmetric attacks against MINUSMA? Does he believe that the idea of a rapid intervention force by the Sahel States could be useful to MINUSMA? MINUSMA is the second-most-dangerous United Nations operation, after that deployed to Somalia during the 1990s. Given this, what does he intend to do and what does he expect of the United Nations to minimize the risks in terms of loss of human lives?

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Leiutenant-General Tesfamariam,

Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Major-General Michael Lollesgaard, Force Commander of the United National Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Major-General Michael Finn, Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. We thank them for their briefings. We express our deep appreciation for the very interesting and useful insights provided.

We acknowledge the dramatic change in the nature and scope of United Nations peace operations worldwide. With reference to the Secretary-General's remarks on 11 June 2014 (see S/PV.7196), at present United Nations peacekeeping missions are forced to operate in situations where there is no peace to keep. Thus the field personnel entrusted with the mandate to protect civilians are themselves increasingly under threat and forced to counter asymmetric and unconventional attacks while carrying out other complex mandated tasks, including protecting the civilian population.

The three topics introduced by the briefers reflect the complex reality of the environment in which peace operations are deployed. I shall briefly address each of them, namely, the challenges involved in the protection of civilians, the challenge of operating in an asymmetric environment, and the challenges arising from caveats and impediments in the command and performance of peace operations.

The protection of civilians has become the central feature of the mandates approved by the Security Council, and the primary reason to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping mission. However, at present this core objective of United Nations missions is seriously challenged by repeated cycles of violence, weak governance and reoccurring instability, even in countries where peace agreements have been successfully implemented.

From the United Nations perspective, interpreting the concept of the protection of civilians consists of a three-tiered approach as part of a mission's strategy — with dialogue and engagement as the first tier, the provision of physical protection as the second and the establishment of a protective environment as the third. Those concepts are key elements in ensuring a mission's success. However, the lack of resources and effective information gathering and analysis undermine the efforts of States working towards unity of purpose with the different troop-contributing countries within a mission. Law and order problems and inadequate training and preparation of military forces are also challenges that the Council must address in a timely manner. Corrective measures are necessary to avoid failure and ensure the best conditions for a mission's success.

Operating under an asymmetric environment is the most extreme situation facing contemporary peacekeeping missions, which were originally designed as a separation force to maintain trust or an armistice agreement between symmetric opposing regular armed forces. At present, as the assessment review shows, an asymmetric environment in which a peacekeeping mission operates poses major security and safety issues to peacekeepers, who are mandated, as their core objective, to protect civilians. That is further compounded by the increasing threat of regional terrorism, particularly in Africa, with the use of vehicle-based bombs and improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks increasing the numbers of casualties among United Nations personnel. It is therefore necessary to establish a comprehensive asymmetrical threat approach as part of a strategic framework aimed at this deadly threat, while maintaining the military and civilian components, thereby permitting the mission to effectively accomplish its mandate.

Finally, the conditionality imposed by caveats acts as an impediment to command and performance, given that unity of command and control is of paramount importance in any mission's performance and success. Also, some Member States contributing troops or police to peacekeeping missions impose caveats, such as with regard to the location of deployment, the types of actions that units are not allowed to undertake and parallel rules of engagement. These, against the backdrop of an operational link between a contingent and their capitals, often result in the disobedience of orders on the part of the Force Commander. That is a totally unacceptable situation, as it hampers the mission's operational capabilities. We are of the view that troop- and police-contributing countries should strictly respect the chain of command, since the failure to follow coherent and consistent orders of the Force Commander may lead to wrongdoing and even catastrophic consequences to all those involved, while damaging the reputation of the entire United Nations system.

In conclusion, we express our deep appreciation for the convening of this meeting, for the briefings provided and for the interaction afforded between

Council members and the Force Commanders as heads of the military components on the ground.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the presidency for convening this informative meeting. We also welcome the briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Force Commanders of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, as part of a joint effort towards achieving peace and security.

I will begin by recalling my country's commitment to peacekeeping operations since 1948 and by reiterating our willingness to continue cooperating on this task, which is the responsibility of all.

The three issues under discussion are absolutely relevant and interrelated and reflect the new situations and challenges and the changing reality involving today's peacekeeping efforts. Regrettably, the civilian population remains the most affected by conflicts, most of which are intra-State in nature. The Council and the international community as a whole are therefore called upon to provide adequate protection for the civilian population and to adopt comprehensive strategies, taking into accoutn the specific needs, especially of women and children.

We reiterate the need for adequate protection-of-civilians training for the military, police or civilians to be deployed. Chile has been contributing for more than a decade through the Chilean Joint Peacekeeping Operations Centre, which is in charge of preparing and training national or foreign personnel prior to deployment.

The Rights up Front Action Plan reaffirms the central role of human rights in the work of the United Nations. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law are ultimately the key concepts underlying the protection of civilians.

Missions play a role as a source of information and in keeping records to ensure that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are held accountable for their actions and do not go unpunished. We support the zero tolerance policy concerning missions. At the same time, we must ensure sufficient dissemination of the protection-of-civilians policy and existing complaints mechanisms to the civilian population and within the missions.

With regard to the situation in UNMISS, recent reports indicate an increase in internally displaced persons and increasingly complex conditions requiring the protection of civilians, including sexual violence perpetrated with impunity, used as a tactic of war. Recognizing the efforts undertaken by the Mission, we would like to ask about the greatest challenges faced by UNMISS in carrying out its mandate, specifically regarding the protection of civilians? Do the briefers believe that the troops have been sufficiently trained, as of today, to carry out the protection of civilians mandate?

The efforts already mentioned are taking place in a difficult environment where, above and beyond the nature of the conflict, actions by terrorist groups or transnational organized criminal networks are taking place. Those new challenges require better-trained and -equipped troops and strengthened national capacities.

The use of intelligence, particularly as a prevention tool, seems appropriate to address such asymmetric threats. The experience in Mali bears that out and reveals the need to predict conflict scenarios. However, it is vital that this activity be provided with a clear regulatory framework. We understand that the discussion should take place among the membership of the United Nations, particularly the troop- and police-contributing countries within the framework of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. In that regard, we would like to know about MINUSMA's experience in managing information and if it led to increased security on behalf of the troops and civilians.

We recognize the importance of the troops deployed on the ground responding to a chain of command to ensure the success of the assigned tasks. However, that does not prevent the troop-contributing countries from determining the conditions and locations under which their forces will be deployed at the time of the signing of the respective memorandums of understanding and according to their capacities and means in relation to particular situations. The early conclusion of such memorandums allows the Department of Operations Peacekeeping to know in advance the elements and units available to meet the different scenarios.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank the three peacekeeping operations Force Commanders for their briefings. Their first-hand accounts and suggestions are useful and can help us to get a better idea of the actual deployment of peacekeeping operations and the difficulties peacekeepers face, all

of which is in the interest of improving the efficiency of the Security Council's work. China wishes to pay its highest tribute to all the Force Commanders present and all the United Nations peacekeeping personnel on duty for their professionalism, which is characterized by dedication, devotion and willingness to sacrifice.

The current international situation has undergone profound changes. There are threats from terrorist organizations, situations where there is no peace to keep, and changes in terms of the growing size of peacekeeping operations. These new developments demand that peacekeeping operations adapt to the changing times and embrace innovation.

China supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to conduct a review of peacekeeping operations during the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. We welcome the report submitted by the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. We expect to further refine mandates, strengthen capabilities and improve the efficiency of United Nations peacekeeping operations through this review, so as to bring peace and hope to host countries and peoples and realize the goal of maintaining international peace and security.

Taking into account the views expressed by the three Commanders, I wish to make the following four points on peacekeeping operations.

First, the basic principles of peacekeeping operations should be upheld unswervingly. The success of the United Nations arises from compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and peacekeeping operations are no different. Continued adherence to the basic principles of peacekeeping operations — the consent of the parties to the conflcit, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence fo the mandate — is fundamental to guaranteeting their smooth conduct, ensuring their fairness and impartiality and winning the support of Member States. We must persist in applying those principles. At the same time, we must refine the rules of engagement and guidelines for troop-contributing countries in the light of changes in the peacekeeping environment and mission mandates, so as to better implement the principles of peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, the mandates of peacekeeping operations should be practical and feasible. In order to solve regional hot-spot issues, we need to have a comprehensive policy. Peacekeeping operations cannot, and should not, attempt to resolve every problem. In deploying peacekeeping operations and in formulating and reviewing peacekeeping mandates, the Council should enhance its political guidance, ensure that the mandates correspond to the actual needs of host countries and clarify priority priorities, targets and specific focuses for various stages. At the same time, we should review the results of the implementation of peacekeeping operations in a phased manner, and, in keeping with the changing environment, we should make adjustments to the mandates of the missions and the deployment of forces. Peacekeeping operations should, in accordance with the changing environment and the will and consent of host countries, determine timely exit strategies.

Thirdly, peacekeeping operations should respect the sovereignty of the host countries. With regard to protecting civilians, host countries have the primary responsibility for protecting their own civilians. Peacekeeping operations should conform to Council mandates and international law and should assist host countries in implementing the responsibilities for protecting civilians. The scope and conditions of the protection-of-civilians mandate should be clearly defined and should be recognized and supported by host countries and the international community in order to prevent misunderstandings and animosity from the local people. Peacekeeping operations should also be equipped with the necessary resources in terms of personnel, equipment and logistics.

Fourthly, peacekeeping operations should strengthen their capacity-building and scientific management. China attaches great importance to the challenges facing peacekeeping operations in an asymmetrical security environment. We hope that the Secretariat and peacekeeping missions will collaborate closely with troop-contributing countries and host countries to come up with tailor-made standards governing the safety of installations, in keeping with the changing security situation in mission areas, and with detailed rules for the organization, training and management of United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

At the same time, there is a need to strengthen the scientific planning and management of peacekeeping missions in order to optimize our financial resources. We should utilize the existing resources more efficiently and avoid unnecessary duplication and waste.

China firmly supports and actively takes part in United Nations peacekeeping operations. At present there are more than 3,000 Chinese peacekeepers on duty in about 10 peacekeeping operations in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan. The Chinese infantry unit assigned to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan is fully deployed. This is the first time that China has sent an infantry unit to United Nations peacekeeping operations. China has also decided to send a helicopter squadron to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. This will be the first time that the Chinese Air Force will join the Blue Helmets. China is willing to send more peacekeeping police and police affairs experts to be part of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We will continue to support African countries in strengthening their capacity-building and to promote the United Nations support of the African Union, as well as other regional organizations, in conducting peacekeeping operations. We are ready to work with the international community to contribute positively to the healthy development of United Nations peacekeeping operations and to make new and positive contributions to the noble cause of maintaining international peace and security.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank all of the Force Commanders for their briefings and for their service. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for assembling the Force Commanders here. This is a critical annual gathering and an important rite of passage.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, the founders of the Organization would never have conceived of the assortment of 16 Force Commanders gathered here today, nor the operating environments into which they deploy. The risk that they and the men and women under their command take are a powerful testament to the spirit that animates the United Nations. Their work, their leadership and their sacrifice could not be more important.

I wish also to take this occasion to extend my country's deep appreciation to all countries on the Council and beyond in the United Nations that deploy troops and police to United Nations missions in very difficult environments. Peacekeepers deserve the support and attention of the Security Council, and we in turn rely on the candour and expertise of Commanders to help us to better address the challenges facing peacekeeping.

Before asking several questions, I will focus on three essential aspects of what the Force Commanders have just touched upon, specifically the imperative of appropriate training, the importance of expanding the pool of troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and the kinds of contributions they make, and the critical question of how the system handles exceptions to the rules of engagement.

First, as has been said, we must prepare peacekeepers for the missions in which they serve, as they are increasingly dangerous missions. As many here know, the United States recently conducted a study in Mali through the United States Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group. I am sure that it will come as no surprise to experienced Force Commanders, but the findings made it abundantly clear that tailored pre-deployment training for peacekeepers headed to Mali is the most important and the largest gap in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and that, of course, was underscored here today by the MINUSMA Force Commander.

We must do everything possible to avoid sending men and women unprepared into environments where violent extremists operate. We owe it to our peacekeepers and the people they protect to do better, and we extend special condolences to Chad, which has lost more soldiers in MINUSMA, I believe, than any other contingent.

While the Asymmetric Warfare Group's findings were specific to Mali, this need for contextualized training, including scenario-based protection-of-civilians training, goes far beyond any one mission. No one size fits all, needless to say. The context of protecting internally displaced persons during the rainy season in South Sudan while cohabitating with them in United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) sites is very different from protecting civilians against rebels who wear army uniforms and melt into the jungle in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or, for that matter, against banditry and militias in the Central African Republic. These are very, very different and specific contexts and specific threat environments.

This leads me to my second point, on expanding the scope of troop-contributing countries and the kinds of contributions they make. We all agree that we need to continue to broaden and deepen the pool of

troop-contributing countries and increase contingents with niche capabilities to operate in challenging environments. Some of those niche capabilities have been discussed today.

To assist in this endeavour, the Secretariat has published a paper detailing the capabilities required for current United Nations peacekeeping operations. President Obama will host a peacekeeping summit during the General Assembly high-level week with the goal of working with the Secretary-General and other troop-contributing countries and financial supporters of peacekeeping to ensure that the United Nations can draw on the resources of contributing nations to fulfil the essential role played by United Nations peacekeeping, to make it more responsive, more effective and safer for civilians as well as for the peacekeepers who compose such missions.

But increased and smarter contributions will not be enough to help modern peacekeeping operations meet the challenges they face. Responsive planning and support to missions must also improve. The legacy structure of sustainment planning and logistics support is currently not adequate to back peacekeepers who face these modern threats. When a peacekeeper in a mission is wounded, be it in Mali, Darfur or elsewhere, it is unconscionable that he or she cannot receive immediate medical care, including evacuation.

Thirdly, I should like to turn quickly to caveats. Force Commanders need to have confidence that contingents will follow their leadership. A recent study from the global peace operations initiative on operational partnerships in United Nations peacekeeping found that restrictive national caveats placed undue burdens on those TCCs that have not put such restrictions in place and that have to pick up the slack. We heard about that here with the specifics of the Golan in mind.

Secret caveats, which are declared only when a crisis breaks out, pose a particular risk to all mission personnel, including the peacekeepers themselves who have the caveats. In emergencies, commanders need to know that orders will be carried out fully and without pushback. But even open caveats, which are made known to mission leadership from the start, are deeply concerning when they restrict the ability of contingents to undertake mission-critical tasks.

Decisions on how peacekeepers respond to a threat or how to engage to protect civilians should be left to the Force Commander and mission leadership and carried out through the mission's chain of command, with full respect for the mission's mandate. Those unwilling to abide by the Force Commander's directives or to fulfil the mandate should not deploy.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address the recent terrible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse being committed at the hands of international forces, including some United Nations peacekeepers. While the vast majority of peacekeepers serve honourably, and make, again, tremendous sacrifices, I must say unequivocally that this alleged conduct is unacceptable and that any personnel who commit such acts must be brought to justice by their national authorities. There is no room in United Nations peacekeeping or in any regional or national mission for those who would prey on the most vulnerable, whom they are there to protect. This should be a principle that all of us can rally around at the United Nations.

Before I give up the floor, I just have a few questions for our briefers.

First, it would be helpful to hear from General Yohannes, as we have about MINUSMA, what the biggest training gaps are among troops who arrive as part of UNMISS and within the Mission headquarters staff. What are the gaps that he would like to see filled? We would welcome any insight he has as to how we, as the Council, might help address these gaps.

I should like also to know what General Finn's standard operating procedure is when a contingent comes to him and informs him that it has certain caveats on his operation. We heard his concerns about caveats, but when he receives that information, does he discuss this, then, with the contingent Commander? Does he inform Department of Peacekeeping Operations headquarters? Is this reported to the Security Council in any manner? It is not, to my knowledge, but it may be that information is circulated that we are not aware of. Could we think constructively and productively about procedural changes that might help us mobilize the will to overcome this challenge, which he eloquently described?

I would also ask Under-Secretary-General Ladsous what is needed from Member States, what is needed within the Secretariat, what is needed in the missions to improve support to peacekeepers with regard to medical evacuations? This is an issue that, of course, every troop-contributing country and police-contributing

country probably would like to have more assurance on before they deploy into harm's way.

I would ask the same question of the Force Commanders, as they are dealing with the mechanics of medical evacuation in the field. Concretely, are there things that they are missing or steps that they think we could be taking to ensure this most basic care for the troops and police under their command?

Mr. Bosah (Nigeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this very important briefing. I welcome the briefers, Lieutenant General Tesfamariam, Major General Lollesgaard and Major General Michael Finn. The clarity and incisiveness of their perspectives on the issues under consideration bear out the wisdom and importance of this interaction, which is aimed at fostering greater synergy between the field and the Security Council. Let me commend them in particular for their immeasurable sacrifices in leading their various peace missions.

It is of global concern that civilians are often deliberately targeted in armed conflicts and frequently subjected to blatant violations of their rights under international law. The Council has since 1999 responded to this challenge by prioritizing the protection of civilians in theatres of conflict. In furtherance of this quest, Security Council resolution 1894 (2009) called for dedicated resources for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. That underlines the compelling necessity to protect the rights of civilians in theatres of conflict and highlights the urgency of continued efforts to improve strategies to address this arduous task. We believe that enhanced cooperation among the United Nations, troop-contributing countries, police-contributing countries and the hosts in the beneficiary States, particularly in areas of mandate formulation and implementation, could achieve this objective.

In a briefing by the Head of Mission of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, Ellen Margrethe Løj, to the Council last month (see S/PV.7444), the widespread human rights abuses and killing of civilians in Unity state of South Sudan was highlighted. It necessitated the evacuation of humanitarian workers, thereby aggravating the suffering of civilians in the state. We note the challenges sustained in these camps and would appreciate the comments of Lieutenant General Tesfamariam on measures being taken to ensure their long-term viability.

As we reflect on modalities for sustained protection-of-civilian sites under such challenging circumstances, we want to reiterate that clarity of mandates on the protection of civilians, and accord among peacekeeping contingents on implementation strategies, are both essential to safeguarding civilians in conflict areas. As peacekeepers strive to implement such mandates, they must at all times endeavour to remain transparent in their actions, as incidents of misconduct — particularly those that border on violence and sexual exploitation of women and children — are inexcusable. Nigeria condemns such acts whenever and wherever they occur. We believe that a speedy and impartial investigation into allegations of such heinous acts and imposition of appropriate sanctions on errant personnel will serve to establish accountability as a hallmark of peacekeeping operations.

The increasing asymmetric attacks on peacekeepers in conflict areas have generated much concern. The casualty rates, especially those in the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, have taken on unacceptable proportions. We propose that the international community increase its assistance to peacekeeping missions and other regional arrangements involving anti-terrorism operations. That could be achieved through the provision of much-needed equipment designed to mitigate the devastating effect of improvised explosive devices.

Also of great concern is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially among non-State actors. That exacerbates conflicts and threatens the well-being of civilians in conflict situations. It also poses challenges to the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates, especially when non-State actors carry out asymmetric attacks against peacekeepers. That is why denying non-State actors sanctuary and forces is of the utmost importance.

We are witness to the evolving nature of conflicts in a contemporary world. This underscores the imperative for the Council to demonstrate greater flexibility in adjustment of peacekeeping mandates without necessarily waiting for their expiration. Such flexibility will enable prompt and appropriate responses to threats on the ground.

I would like to conclude by affirming our commitment to collective security as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, while paying tribute to those who have paid the ultimate price in the line of

duty so that others might live in peace. Let us take this opportunity to renew our resolve as peacekeepers to respecting and preserving the fundamentals of United Nations peacekeeping.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Malaysian delegation of for organizing today's meeting. We are also grateful to the Force Commanders of the military components of the missions in South Sudan, Mali and the Middle East for their very comprehensive briefings. We believe that this type of meeting format — by now traditional in nature — is most useful. It allows us to better grasp problems facing United Nations contingents on the ground and to understand operational issues concerning the activities of missions. This dialogue is especially important in its consideration of the new challenges and threats facing today's United Nations peacekeeping operations, whose mandates are increasingly complex and comprehensive.

One of the most dangerous trends is the growth of non-traditional, non-State actors jeopardizing the safety of peacekeepers. That places additional responsibilities on the Security Council, which formulates the mandates of peacekeeping operations. Currently, the majority of peacekeeping operations are tasked with the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict. We are convinced that the effectiveness of their implementation is based on unswerving compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law and the Security Council's mandates, which, in turn, must be clear and not subject to multiple interpretations.

The deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations is a harbinger of hope for States in situations of conflict. The population expects support to be provided from the Organization, as well as measures to suppress violence. That is why inaction on the part of missions — just like the excessive use of force that goes beyond the parameters set by the provisions of the mandates — has a negative impact on the standing of the United Nations and undermines the local population's trust in the United Nations presence. In that context, the imperative is to forge constructive daily cooperation between peacekeepers and local authorities and to promote capacity-building by host States, which bear direct responsibility for the protection of their own population. That applies, first and foremost, to missions where the protection of civilians is a primary objective. For example, the Security Council initially entrusted the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) with a fairly strong mandate to protect the civilian population. Unfortunately, however, as a result of various factors, including systemic shortcomings in terms of political and military analysis and forecasting and operational planning in South Sudan, the Mission was not always ready to tackle the tasks that had been set. We expect that a careful analysis of the experience of the leaders of UNMISS, the provision of regular information to the Security Council about the situation on the ground, as well as the allocation of substantial additional resources to the Misison will have a positive bearing on its effectiveness.

Of significant concern are the asymmetric threats that have arisen in areas where United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed. Among these were a string of violent acts targeting the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers, which led to numerous casualties. In that regard, we note some work on past mistakes made by the leadership of the Mission. It has become clear that the effective implementation of sanctions within the framework of Security Council-granted broad mandates is feasible only if peacekeepers are perfectly prepared and specially trained and psychologically hardened, as well as supplied with the appropriate modern equipment and transport assets. Contingency deployment locations must be fortified in military and engineering terms. Proper coordination and exchange of operational data are also essential. That process should involve host States and their security forces, with strict respect for their sovereignty and that of neighbouring and other interested States and, if present, that of other foreign military presences on the ground.

We think that the implementation of the aforementioned tasks is impossible without appropriate and clear command structures. However, the concept of military responsibility is not limited to giving orders, but also includes responsibility for the safety and security one's subordinates. That is why a careful analysis of emerging threats to United Nations personnel must be an indispensable component in the planning of operations. Achieving objectives should not take place to the detriment of United Nations Blue Helmets. The timeliness of the issues being discussed is borne out by the fact that they were also clearly reflected in yesterday's presentation to the Secretary-General by the experts of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations of their report and recommendations, which need to be carefully analysed and discussed.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting, which we frankly find very useful. We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and the three Force Commanders — of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) — for their briefings.

Spain would like to take this opportunity once again to reiterate its appreciation of the work done by the peacekeeping missions. We also thank the contingents and the troop-contributing countries for their generosity and commitment to maintaining international peace and security. This year is particularly important because of the review of peacekeeping operations that is being conducted, to which Spain has contributed with a view to strengthening the missions and improving their effectiveness and security. I should like to make three general comments.

First, we must work together to prevent a gulf from opening between the mandates and their implementation on the ground. To that end, we must not only be extremely careful in defining the mandates but also try and improve the effectiveness with which they are implemented, since the failure of such implementation fosters doubts and affects the credibility of the missions themselves.

Secondly, mandates must always go hand in hand with the necessary capabilities. Contingents must receive adequate, specific training, equipment and resources to increase their reaction capability, their mobility and the use of new technologies.

Thirdly, for Spain, the work being done by peacekeeping operations to protect civilians is essential, although we must not forget that such protection is principally the responsibility of the States. MINUSMA is operating in extremely difficult conditions paradigmatic of the new volatile environments in which missions are operating today. I can assure Major General Lollesgaard that MINUSMA is the subject of the Security Council's constant concern and attention. One of his predecessors, Major General Kazura, stated that MINUSMA was operating

> "in a terrorist-fighting situation without an anti-terrorist mandate or adequate training, equipment, logistics or intelligence to deal with such a situation" (*S/PV.7275, p. 33*).

Subsequently, in November 2014, the Security Council held an interactive dialogue to address the appropriateness of the mandate of MINUSMA in view of the asymmetric attacks on the Mission. The concept of operations, which dated from 2013, was revised to take into account the new political and security climate, and a series of measures was taken to purge elements that we might describe as irregular.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2015/426) includes proposals to improve the flexibility, reaction capability and effectiveness of the Mission in an environment that is, let us remember, asymmetric. In other words, far from being inactive, the Security Council has been very attentive to developments on the ground. Unfortunately, however, the number of casualties and victims among the Blue Helmets of MINUSMA remains very high and the difficulties faced by the Mission in carrying out its mandate are enormous. Spain wishes to condemn the intentional attacks on the Mission's staff, a situation that we consider absolutely unacceptable. We must explore accountability mechanisms and the Government of Mali must cooperate with us on this matter. As we all know, the main challenge remains the discrepancy between the diagnosis of the situation, which is that of a political crisis, and the reality of an asymmetric environment characterized by jihadi terrorism, organized crime networks and, above all, the overwhelming isolation of MINUSMA in the north of the country.

We need to find a balance between the security of the contingents and the fulfilment of the mandates, but all involved are obliged to ensure that the staff can carry out their functions with security standards that are appropriate given the threats and circumstances and allow them to implement their mandate. The introduction of new technologies is essential for the effective performance of these tasks and the security of the contingents themselves.

With regard to UNMISS, we wish to reiterate our support for a Mission that has also been operating in a very complex environment since last year. The work done to provide shelter for 118,000 refugees and internally displaced persons is extraordinary and has defined the Mission's day-to-day situation. Although each United Nations operation is a separate world, as Mr. Ladsous pointed out in his briefing, we must recognize that the

shift from essentially a peace consolidation operation to one focused on protecting civilians represents a radical change that poses tremendous challenges. In our opinion, the joint efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan, the Force Commander and the troop-contributing countries must be evaluated to make the Mission more proactive and robust. At the same time, we must seek to improve the Mission's effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate, including the projection of its presence outside the refugee camps.

Let us remember that UNMISS is an integrated Mission and that coordination and coherence among all of its components is therefore supposed to exist. Without such coordination and coherence, the Mission will fail. It is very important that the United Nations continue monitoring and observing the human rights situation in South Sudan. I would recall that, when the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was renewed, the Security Council took an important step forward by requesting the Secretary-General to provide updates on the ways in which the Mission was fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians and on the measures it was taking to transform itself and perform its mandates more efficiently and effectively. At the proposal of Spain, such a requirement was also introduced for UNMISS because we consider it a good practice that should be followed in all the other missions.

With regard to UNTSO and the question of caveats, we believe that the troop-contributing countries can legitimately impose caveats on the deployment of their troops under certain conditions, provided that such caveats are expressed in the appropriate way and with the appropriate respect for the chain of command. It is precisely when a peacekeeping operation is obliged to operate in a crisis situation — in a hostile environment — that the maintenance of the chain of command acquires critical importance and must be respected without interference from the national authorities involved.

Even when caveats are worded in compliance with the established procedures, however, they can of course complicate the fulfilment of mandates, particularly when an operation is forced to deploy in hostile conditions, for example when the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was obliged to withdraw to the Alpha line in September 2014. Fortunately, Observer Group Golan, which consists of UNTSO observers, was able to maintain a number of positions on the Bravo line in the Mount Hermon area, where, unless military observers carry on working, it would be very difficult for UNDOF to continue to implement its mandate. At their new positions on the Alpha line, the UNTSO observers continued their work in very difficult conditions, illustrated by various incidents in late April and early May that resulted in four of the contingent being injured and the evacuation of observation post 51. I would like to thank Major General Finn and all the UNTSO observers deployed with UNDOF for the admirable work they continue to do in very difficult conditions. Today the ability to patrol with guarantees or deploying to agreed observation points continues to be far from reality. That is producing violations of the terms of resolution 350 (1974) for both sides. Armed groups, including the Al-Nusra Front, which is on the list of terrorist groups, are present in the area. That may be the greatest violation of the separation agreements, but it is not the only one.

I would like to ask Major General Finn, can the UNTSO observers carry out their tasks in their present positions while complying with the minimum levels of operability?

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and the Force Commanders, whom we commend for the frankness of their assessments, as befits the seasoned professional leaders they clearly are.

I would also like to acknowledge and pay tribute to all who serve the United Nations, especially those in high-risk environments. Today we have again been reminded that some United Nations soldiers make the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives in the performance of their duty. This phenomenon of dead United Nations soldiers is extraordinarily confronting. Whatever the reality of the new threat environment, it should not be happening. United Nations peacekeepers should not even be targets, let alone casualties. The fact that it is happening is at the core of the three briefings we have had today. It is also at the core of why some countries find it so difficult to contribute troops to United Nations operations.

Yesterday, the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations told us that all peacekeepers — civilian, military and police — must do all they can to ensure that civilians are not harmed. That is clearly right, yet as we have been reminded today by General Tesfamariam, living up to that principle, which flows so easily off the

tongue, is extraordinarily difficult. The challenge for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan is indeed extraordinary — a complete breakdown of civilian Government, with our poor soldiers left to protect the civilians whose Government and leaders have abandoned them. It is unacceptable that the force is having to contend with direct harassment and repeated violations of the status-of-forces agreement. We believe that the Security Council must keep a very close eye on South Sudan and the situation there.

I would also like to congratulate Major General Lollesgaard on the frankness of his assessment. He has told us bluntly that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is not properly equipped to operate in the asymmetric threat environment prevailing in northern Mali. That is something that the Organization must listen and respond to. We wholeheartedly support his plea that troops who are sent to Mali are indeed trained and equipped to deal with the situation in which they must operate. We welcome the progress the General was able to point to, particularly in the development of an intelligence capability. We acknowledge the importance of intelligence for enhancing situational awareness, in assisting force protection and supporting the protection of civilians. I would like to ask him whether he sees a role for an all-sources information forces unit capability in the Mission to assist in the conduct of an information operations campaign.

I would also like to ask him a question that continues to challenge me when I think about the operations that the United Nations must now work in. Can a force that is equipped with the armour and other equipment needed to operate safely in a serious threat environment at the same time make the connections to the local population that are necessary to engender the trust that we know is essential to the fulfilment of their mission?

I would like to commend Major General Finn for laying out so clearly the challenge he has had to confront in dealing with the caveats imposed by various troop contributors to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). In a similar spirit of candour, I want to acknowledge that the reason for some of those caveats is related to a concern that the United Nations operation was not sufficiently equipped, directed and supported to ensure the protection of the soldiers operating there. We do not like caveats, and we certainly agree with the Ambassador of the United States that if caveats are imposed, they should be imposed openly and must not come as a surprise to the Force Commander. New Zealand has withdrawn the caveats it had in place on military observers serving in UNTSO, based on improved medical support, the rehearsal of casualty evacuation plans and the inclusion in the mission of a team to counter improvised explosive devices. But the issue is a serious one, and we believe there must be an open and honest conversation between the troop contributors, the Secretariat and the Council about the caveats and the reasons for them, and how we might find a way of minimizing and preferably doing away with them entirely.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I welcome this opportunity for a candid and constructive discussion with the Force Commanders. I wish to thank Mr. Ladsous and the three Generals for their briefings. I look forward to their responses to our questions.

I would first like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Force Commanders for their service and leadership, and to the men and women who serve in and support the United Nations peace operations. They are all at the sharpest edge of the Security Council's efforts to preserve international peace and security, putting their lives on the line in the most challenging environments. And sadly, as we have seen in places such as Mali and South Sudan, that dedication comes at a tragic cost.

The Commanders' insights into the reality on the ground and the constraints they face are invaluable to the Council's decision-making on their mandates and, ultimately, to the promotion of international peace and security, and I would therefore encourage them to always be open and frank so that we can provide them with the best possible support.

That need for ever-greater transparency and accountability was also a prominent feature of yesterday's peace operations review panel and, as was said then in relation to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, zero tolerance must mean zero tolerance. All troop-contributing countries must robustly follow up any such allegations involving their troops and report back to the United Nations. More broadly, we favour honest and open communications, including through meetings such as this one, to create ever-greater openness about peacekeeping more broadly.

The protection of civilians is an issue that the United Kingdom cares deeply about. In the darkest moments of conflict, people all over the world look to the United

Nations and its peacekeepers for reassurance and protection, and we all have a responsibility to deliver. To do so, it is critical that United Nations peacekeepers be prepared to use force, where necessary and within their mandates, to protect civilians under immediate threat. The principle of the protection of civilians is now widely supported by the United Nations and Member States, yet the question of how peacekeepers make the decision to intervene and how they choose to do so still poses huge problems. We therefore need the Force Commanders' honest assessments of what is working and what is not, and of what is possible and what is not. In turn, we will be honest with them about the resources and equipment we can provide.

I would like to ask the Generals what they and other Force Commanders need from the Council to enable their missions to protect civilians effectively. What more can we do beyond providing more resources, and how can we work with them to keep their host Governments accountable for protecting their civilians, particularly in cases such as that of South Sudan, whose Government has so clearly failed to provide that protection so far? A few weeks ago, Rwanda launched an initiative to encourage all troop-contributing countries to agree on a set of pledges to better protect civilians. The United Kingdom considers the initiative a great step forward, but I would be interested to hear the Force Commanders' views and those of other Force Commanders in the Chamber.

Let me turn now to the threat posed by asymmetric environments, set out so clearly by the Force Commander of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. As new challenges to international peace and security emerge, new technology will have to play a greater role. But, in order to be effective, that new technology must be supported by training and exercises and must be used by troops that come ready and willing to meet evolving threats. Predeployment training is crucial, particularly in cultivating the right mindset and skills to confront asymmetric threats, so that troops stand their ground when protecting civilians. I am interested to hear the views on how we can better instil the necessary proactive and creative mindset needed by all peacekeepers deployed to modern peacekeeping missions.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, I believe that it is time for us to have a more honest conversation, like that begun today, about the national caveats of troop-contributing countries. I welcome the comments by Major General Finn. Like it or not, caveats exist and we need to work and plan around them. That can happen only if we are clear from the outset about what we are prepared to allow our troops to do. We must also be up front about changes in caveats over time, particularly as the nature of the mission or conflict changes. Caveats often do not become apparent until the situation deteriorates, leaving Force Commanders unclear about what their troops can and cannot do. It is that uncertainty that leads to problems. In the worst circumstances, it can lead to command and control failures that put the lives of troops and civilians at risk.

Let me conclude by asking all the Force Commanders in the Chamber today what more the Council and the Secretariat can do to reduce those caveats and to ensure that they and the mission leaders are aware of the caveats that remain from the outset. What more can we do to reinforce the importance of the chain of command?

I again thank the Generals for their briefings today, and all the other Force Commanders for coming to today's meeting. I look forward to hearing their views.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important informative briefing. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his comments and thank the Force Commanders of the peacekeeping operations for briefing us in the Council today.

On behalf of my country, I would like to begin by recognizing the personal commitments and sacrifice of the officers, troops and staff of United Nations peacekeeping missions. On a daily basis, they risk their lives in carrying out their tasks. We would like to honour those who have lost their lives in carrying out their mission.

We would like to focus on an issue suggested by you, Mr. President, which requires deep discussion within the United Nations, the issue of the protection of civilians, concerning which we would like to emphasize the following points.

First, we reiterate the urgent need to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack, as defined by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which is the only body empowered to develop policies and doctrines regarding peacekeeping operations, in accordance with international law and respect for the sovereignty of the States concerned. Peacekeeping

operations must emphasize the prevention of violence, using their political capital to intercede and negotiate with the parties in conflict, bearing in mind that the political settlement of the conflicts must be the primary objective of their actions.

We favour strengthening the deterrent capability of peacekeeping operations in the protection of civilians. In that regard, we support the development of rapid deployment and standby force capabilities for the protection of civilians. The military personnel of peacekeeping operations must be able not only to mobilize quickly to the host country or countries, they should also be able to deploy swiftly within a given territory. The staff therefore need adequate resources.

We reaffirm the importance of respecting and maintaining the principles that guide peacekeeping operations in protecting civilians, such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in situations of legitimate defence and in compliance with the mandate. Peacekeeping operations must not be used to impose peace. For Venezuela, the key role of peacekeeping operations must be to support the host Government, which has the primary responsibility to protect civilians. We must also provide our support to developing the institutional capacity of the State in order to work towards a sustainable solution to the conflict.

However effective a mission is in protecting civilians, it can never substitute for the role of the State. In that regard, we support the zero-tolerance policy when it comes to sexual abuse against women and children, which has taken place in some missions. Such acts are unacceptable, and those who are responsible should be brought to justice. Therefore, we also support the need to increase the presence of women in the management and composition of mission contingents, as we have discussed previously in the Council.

Turning to the issue of asymmetric threats, our country wishes to make the following points. It is increasingly common to deploy peacekeeping operations in political and security environments dominated by fragility and violence, where there is no peace to keep or no political process to support. That has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of kidnappings and killings of United Nations personnel in targeted attacks. Those are unacceptable. The use of peacekeeping operations in tasks to impose peace and to combat terrorism and international organized crime will only increase the risk of asymmetric threats and attacks against peacekeepers, including civilian personnel and partner organizations. Therefore, we must establish mandates and expectations for the peacekeeping operations that are achievable, on the basis of a clear-sighted analysis of the conflict and a long-term political strategy.

Regarding the establishment of safeguards or caveats by the troop-contributing countries for the deployment of their contingents, we would like to note that, given the immense risk to life and limb to which personnel in today's peacekeeping operations are exposed, all troop-contributing countries should have the right to discuss the objectives and purposes of the mission they are accepting. In that context, we reaffirm the importance of troop-contributing countries being able to actively participate in the Security Council's decision-making process related to the functioning of the relevant operations involving their personnel, in accordance with Article 44 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we wish to reaffirm that peace and the sustained well-being of peoples can be achieved through the political resolution of conflicts and addressing their root causes. Those should be the guiding principles of our efforts within the framework of the Organization.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity for us to take part in this very constructive discussion. I would also like to thank the Force Commanders of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as well as the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, for their briefings.

As many speakers have said, peacekeeping operations have undergone major changes over the past few years in order to keep up with security and political changes and to adapt to new environments in host States — environments that are often complex and complicated in nature in which there is sometimes no peace to keep, and no peace to build. Those developments include the creation of rapid intervention forces as part of many peacekeeping operations, such as the force present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the ever more frequent use of force by peacekeepers, which poses a challenge to the most basic principles of peacekeeping.

The primary challenge remains how to respond to non-State actors, who are present in many armed conflicts in the areas where United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed. Such groups often operate in the absence of clear rules of engagement, use force without respect for international legal frameworks and hide among the civilian population. Their command structure is often complex, diffuse and multipronged. The linkage among armed conflict, terrorism and organized crime has grown in a large number of countries, which requires peacekeeping operations to adapt rapidly and wisely to the new political and security environment that has taken hold throughout the world.

We have observed that such emerging threats have forced peacekeeping operations to implement such principles under pressure and constraints, outside the framework of their mandates and without the foundations of a clear strategy. That principle has been followed for the past few years without developing the concepts and necessary principles within the framework of peacekeeping operations mandates, and without awareness or understanding of the dynamic of peacekeeping operations on the ground or the root causes of conflicts that would lead to appropriate responses or put an end to the phenomenon that strengthens extremism, terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Furthermore, it is essential to think about the use of force to maintain the mandates of peacekeeping operations within the framework of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in a transparent way that respects international law and international humanitarian law while continuing peacekeeping operations and protecting them from attacks, especially those forces active under Chapter VII.

The activities of rapid intervention forces mean that civilian employees of peacekeeping operations sometimes become the targets of those asymmetric attacks and the victims of asymmetric threats. The Council must therefore develop a common understanding, in consultation with Member States and troop-contributing countries, for devising ways to address that problem and to uphold the legality of measures undertaken in that regard, as well as to implement mandates in an appropriate way to address unconventional, asymmetric challenges and threats.

Furthermore, it is essential to closely look into the partnerships between the United Nations and international and regional organizations and to review peacekeeping mandates to ensure that they can have recourse to force as required, as well as to strengthen their intelligence-gathering capabilities. In that regard, we hope that the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations will come up with recommendations that will enable the Organization to tackle current challenges such as the ones I have just mentioned, which while they may not threaten certain countries, pose a threat to the whole world.

The protection of civilians is discussed in an idealistic way within the framework of peacekeeping operations, which is the main thrust of their action. However, the guiding principles for the forces on the ground do not cover the protection of civilians in a systematic and comprehensive way. Very often, the guidelines have been based on the protection of military forces more than on the protection of civilians. That is understandable. However, there is a gap that needs to be considered in defining the mandates for peacekeeping operations so as to guarantee a balance between the ability to protect civilians and to protect the mandate of the mission itself with respect to the use of force to defend the mandate and to address emerging challenges.

There can be no doubt that peacekeeping operations play an important role in the protection of civilians. However, because they do so in a temporary way, a permanent solution with respect to the protection of civilians lies first and foremost with the host State. That requires work to be carried out through two processes. The first includes security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law and greater responsibilty for violations of human rights law and international law. The second process must also guarantee responsibilty and national ownership of host States in order to create a solid foundation for the protection of civilians and to guarantee that it is lasting in nature. Indeed, the protection of civilians must take into account the strategic and tactical aspects of peacekeeping operations.

That leads directly to the other elements that impact peacekeeping operations, namely, the constraints imposed by troop-contributing countries, whether they be military or police contingents, on the operations in which they play an active part. Those troops often obey the orders of their national hierarchies rather than heeding the commanders of the operation itself, which impacts the way orders are followed and executed.

Therefore, it is vital to take into account the legal responsibility of the United Nations. It is essential to underscore the need to put in writing the cooperation between United Nations and troop-contributing countries to develop and strengthen the guiding principles of the operational mechanisms of armies and police to guarantee planning and permanent contacts between them, by clearly defining the hierarchies and the lines of command and control in peacekeeping operations.

By way of conclusion, we would like to reiterate that Jordan, as an active contributor to 10 of the 16 peacekeeping operations throughout the world, will continue to support the efforts of the international community and the United Nations to develop a clear vision that offers viable solutions to address contemporary challenges and that enables us to be as prepared as possible to respond with wisdom and flexibility so as to effectively and firmly manage both the current and future challenges facing peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, as well as the Force Commanders of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization for their briefings and, of course, for their work. I shall very briefly touch upon the three topics that were presented to us.

The first concerns the protection of civilians, which is increasingly at the very heart of our mandates. This trend was not a self-evident one, but following the tragedies experienced by the international community, notably in Africa and the Balkans, it has become a necessity, in the name of the principle of humanity, which lies at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations. The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations just recognized this, while endeavouring not to give rise to impossible expectations. We wish to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets, who face this demanding work on a daily basis.

We do not underestimate the difficulty of these mandates in crisis situations across vast territories, often devoid of infrastructure, where the population is faced with the violence of ruthless armed groups. Such implementation entails comprehensive action, which involves political settlement of crisis, prevention, support for the restoration of the State's authority and, sometimes, when necessary, the use of force. Our challenge today is to tailor peacekeeping operations in all their aspects to the implementation of these mandates for the good of the civilian population, who are the first victims of armed conflicts.

In that respect, the human aspect is of the utmost importance. Missions must be able to establish close ties with the populations they are to protect. From this point of view, the use of the French language must be fully taken into account, and I would like to recall here again that we need more French-speakers in current peacekeeping operations — from privates right up to the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, including in New York. This is a precondition for operational effectiveness.

Finally, the protection of civilians should not be limited to ensuring their physical security. Respect for human rights and the protection of women and children are of course at the centre of our priorities. We will have an opportunity to touch upon this issue tomorrow during the open debate on children and armed conflict. But it is absolutely clear in that regard that the behaviour of Blue Helmets must be irreproachable, and zero tolerance must be applied to any actions that could sully the standing of the United Nations.

The second topic concerns action in an asymmetric environment. Blue Helmets are confronted with new threats that sometimes target them directly. In that context, we must respond with trained troops, appropriately equipped, including by providing missions with the necessary multiplier effects: air assets but also sanitary support and logistics and the engineering, combat and work units they often lack. We encourage Member States that have such capacity to fill these gaps, and we encourage the exchanges of training and education among Member States. The Force Commander of MINUSMA could provide details on the status of his force regarding these aspects, and the lessons to be learned for other theatres, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Lebanon, where similar challenges exist.

We also have to open peacekeeping operations to modern technology, as is proposed by the report of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in United Nations Peacekeeping dated February 2015. By bolstering our capabilities in terms of information-processing and the protection of Blue Helmets, technology allows us to better understand the environment we are active in, to anticipate and to act

upstream of peaks of violence to protect people in the best possible security conditions.

Moreover, the new type of challenges we face requires an optimal mobilization of operational and logistical resources available. The operational margin of manoeuvre of a force cannot be impeded by a logistical organization that is unadapted to the theatre. On the other hand, it must be based on the rapid deployment of support capacities, including emergency measures needed for infrastructure work.

Therefore — with regard to the third topic, namely, the issue of caveats — we have the responsibility to ensure that our operations possess the necessary resources for their success and that they are used efficiently, which entails two basic requirements. One is to adapt the modus operandi of the peacekeeping operations to their mandates. Mobile, dynamic, reactive and responsive forces close to the populations are needed in relation to those who seek to derail peace processes and who target civilians and peacekeepers. A proactive attitude is the best way to respond to this dual objective, the protection of civilians and force protection. It would be useful to hear the three Force Commanders share their experiences regarding constraints linked to caveats.

The second requirement is to avoid any ambiguity during the force generation undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Fraught as it is with the risk to the force and the civilian population, we cannot allow contingents, for national reasons, to avoid carrying tasks ordered by commanders. An effective upstream consultation process is essential to dispel such ambiguities.

The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, submitted to the Secretary-General yesterday, notes these problems facing peacekeeping operations. France will remain engaged regarding these issues and will carefully consider the numerous recommendations set out in the report.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate France's deep-rooted commitment to United Nations peacekeeping, to which we fully contribute with Blue Helmets — for example, within the framework of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, as well as in our national capacity and under the European Union — in support of peacekeeping operations, including in Mali, the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. Today, 7,800 French soldiers are engaged in foreign operations, including nearly 1,000 directly in the service of the United Nations and 6,000 under a United Nations mandate. Since January 2013, 13 of our countrymen have paid for that commitment with their lives. The most recent was Mr. Damien Dustrit in 2014 in Lebanon. I would like to pay tribute here to their memory, as well as that of all their Blue Helmet comrades fallen on the battlefield to bring to life the ideals espoused by the United Nations.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank today's invitees for their insightful, thought-provoking and detailed briefings.

As we heard earlier today, Lithuania also welcomes this once-a-year opportunity to hear from United Nations Force Commanders about the most pressing challenges in today's peacekeeping. Given the changing peacekeeping environment and the ever more complex challenges that peacekeepers face, an exchange of this kind once a year is the very least we can do. Let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all of the Force Commanders, whose sound judgment and decisions under increasing fire are critical for the successful implementation of mandates, as well as for the lives of peacekeepers and those they serve to protect.

The primary responsibility to protect civilians, as we often say, rests with the national Governments. However, as seen in various crises, there is often a tragic lack of the national capacity needed to protect one's own populations, and at times even a lack of political will. The protection of civilians under imminent threat therefore remains a key priority for peacekeeping missions. Mission leadership is crucial, as it must ensure that the protection of civilians, including women and children, is considered an essential task by the mission as a whole. That is a key element of the "one mandate, one mission, one force" approach, which we strongly support.

In the current environment, a static presence is far from sufficient; peacekeeping has progressed along a much more kinetic line. Peacekeepers must be ready to demonstrate their willingness and the courage to act in a proactive manner — to fight insecurity and protect civilian lives and themselves. Within the mission, all must be fully committed to the mandate, prepared and ready to defend it by force if necessary. Implementing protection mandates requires clear focus, improved situational awareness, intelligence and analysis, adequate structures, logistics and materiel, training and resources.

In South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) took an extraordinary step to accommodate thousands of internally displaced persons at its sites, saving countless lives. However, acknowledge the challenges such a step poses to the Mission. As a political solution remains distant, the numbers of those in need of protection can only keep growing. All parts of the United Nations should work together to find suitable solutions to address the situation. Closer interaction with local populations, as some of the Force Commanders noted earlier today, and better cooperation with the Government of South Sudan are required, especially when it comes to securing a safe environment to facilitate the voluntary return of internally displaced persons. However, continuous violations of the status of forces agreement do not help and are a cause of serious concern.

In that context, I would like to inquire whether Force Commander Tesfamariam could elaborate on the practical impact of such violations on the protection mandate and on the Mission's own provisions and supplies. Other questions to the Force Commander would be: To what extent would an arms embargo help UNMISS in its task to protect civilians? How do peacekeepers themselves feel in that complex environment? What measures have been taken to ensure their safety under the current circumstances? What is the perception of the operating climate in terms of the Mission, at present?

Turning to operations in an asymmetric environment, it is important to recognize that a number of countries hosting United Nations peacekeeping operations are countries where the levels of threats from militant and terrorist groups are among the highest. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is one of the missions that is operating in an exceptionally challenging environment, where local populations seem to expect it to substitute for the Government and provide services for which the Government is responsible, while at the same time they are interpreting its role as biased in favour of one or another side to the conflict. All of that is taking place in the presence of a persistent terrorist threat and growing interconnections between trans-border organized crime, terrorist networks and traffickers — as a result, MINUSMA has become one of the deadliest missions.

Attacks on peacekeeping personnel in Mali have taken a significant toll on the Mission's efforts: 28 peacekeepers have lost their lives. We pay our respects to all of those that have lost their lives in that noble Mission.

The recent mine attack of 28 May in the region of Tombouctou on the MINUSMA convoy in which the Force Commander and Police Commissioner were travelling is yet another reminder that the Mission has become a primary target of attacks by extremist groups. In our view, the lack of accountability in that case, as in many others involving the deaths of peacekeepers, has certainly become a big challenge.

With regard to the operational environment, the Force Commander has spoken about the importance of intelligence gathering and better intelligence analysis. We can only concur with that, and on the use and importance of adequate modern technologies in operations in ensuring a safer environment and facilitating preparations for the adequate protection of civilians.

As another delegation has already asked, we too would like to know how the Security Council could better enable Force Commanders to lead and command their forces. What are the current command and control structures, and are they flexible enough to operate in a highly dynamic threat environment? What else can we do, as Council members, to facilitate the work of the Force Commanders? What training and additional equipment would be most needed? If one had to indicate one item, what would it be? What additional measures must be considered to ensure the protection of the force itself? Is the increase in the ceiling of the missions under the current circumstances sufficient? Would an additional increase be necessary?

Finally, on national caveats, the safety and security of peacekeepers is, and must remain, among the top United Nations priorities, as well as one of the key factors for troop- and police-contributing countries to continue providing the forces necessary in the field. In a rapidly changing security environment, even long-functioning traditional peacekeeping missions are facing asymmetric and unconventional threats. Countries therefore resort to using caveats to minimize the risks to their contingents. As has been described before and as the information note indicates, that practice may become a challenge to command and

control, and hence to mission performance, and is of course of concern to Force Commanders.

In that respect, mutual commitments between the United Nations and the troop-contributing countries are necessary. The United Nations must ensure that the utmost will be done to ensure safe and secure mandate implementation, as well as the safety and security of peacekeepers. We in the Council must support those efforts by ensuring that missions are adequately supplied and trained and that accountability for attacks against United Nations personnel is pursued with all due vigour. At the same time, the troop-contributing countries should recognize the need for efforts to flexibly adjust a mission's posture and tasks in an environment that is evolving daily, as well as the growing need for robust peacekeeping operations that are a departure from the long-standing static peacekeeping tradition. That issue is naturally linked to the peacekeeping operations review process and should be further discussed in the light of the new report and recommendations by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

Lastly, many delegations have spoken about accountability for sexual crimes and a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual crimes without regard to the perpetrator. Certainly, my delegation adds its voice to all of those concerns expressed and calls for accountability and strict implementation of the zero-tolerance policy.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malaysia.

At the outset, I join other colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and the Generals for their respective briefings, which my delegation followed with much interest. At the same time, Malaysia wishes to express its appreciation to all of the Force Commanders and Heads of the military components of United Nations operations and of the African Union Mission in Somalia, for joining us in the Security Council today.

We believe that this briefing is timely, particularly in light of the completion of the review work of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the submission of its report to the Secretary-General just yesterday. As much ground has been covered by previous speakers, with views and comments with which we can associate ourselves, my remarks will be fairly brief.

Malaysia concurs with the assessment that over time the protection of civilians has emerged as a central purpose and core mandate of contemporary peacekeeping operations. We note that, at present, 10 of the existing 16 peacekeeping missions are mandated to undertake protection-of-civilians mandates. The challenges to civilian protection are vast, ranging from needs on the ground and a challenging security environment, to a lack of infrastructure. Peacekeepers are often responsible for protecting large populations spread out over vast areas, but they usually lack material resources to effectively execute the mandate.

We strongly believe that, in order to implement the mandate to protect civilians, peacekeepers themselves must be held to the highest standard. In that regard, any allegations of impropriety on the part of peacekeepers or the civilian components of United Nations missions must be addressed in a timely, transparent and impartial manner with a view to maintaining, among other things, the integrity and credibility of the institution as a whole. A zero-tolerance policy must be observed and adhered to fully.

We take this opportunity to once again express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the loved ones of the peacekeepers who have sacrificed their life.

The ongoing conflict in Mali clearly outlines the complexity of the crisis, in which the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has been placed at the forefront, particularly with regard to addressing intersecting challenges, including the nexus between local conflict dynamics, organized crime and jihadist extremism.

The United Nations has been able to take innovative steps in other conflict situations to better improve the deployment of peacekeepers on the ground and to adapt to a hostile environment, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At a technical level, the deployment of intelligence units and the procurement of improvised explosive device-resistant equipment, including armoured and mine-protective vehicles, has helped to enhance the capabilities of peacekeepers to operate more safely in an asymmetrical environment.

With regard to the briefing on caveats, we concur with the observation that the inclusion of so-called national caveats could complicate or hamper the smooth running of United Nations peacekeeping operations and missions with regard to issues such as parallel chains of command, the linking of field contingents to

national headquarters main command, and personnel performance. We are fully aware that effective command and control is paramount to the successful pursuit of a mandate. In our view, this parallel command structure should be dealt with by addressing troop-contributing countries well before formulating a mandate. We also understand that the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations has also seriously considered this issue in its recent report to the Secretary-General and has made certain recommendations for addressing it.

As a troop- and police-contributing country, Malaysia looks forward to working closely with other Council members and all interested partners and stakeholders on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping, as well as on safeguarding the safety, security and well-being of our peacekeepers.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Lieutenant General Tesfamariam to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Lieutenant General Tesfamariam: The first question I will address concerns the major challenge that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is facing. We face major challenges in addition to the presence of internally displaced persons (IDPs), which is not common in United Nations peacekeeping history. We have a shortage of resources. As I tried to indicate, we have what I consider a United Nations mindset issue within the existing manpower, but more than that, the most critical issue is the continual fighting in South Sudan since December 2013. Because of that we have continual displacement and civilians are suffering. It is a serious challenge for the Mission.

I remember the Council's visit to South Sudan and its visit to the IDP site in Malakal. The singular message of the IDPs to the members of the Security Council was very clear. They requested the Council to help them by silencing the guns. I consider that very challenging. It is a challenge to the Mission, to the civilians, to the mandate and to us. It is really worrying, and it is the cause behind our IDP sites and protection sites, which are still increasing in number gradually.

I believe we have the right approach with regard to the protection of civilians. Given the reality in South Sudan, our approach is to be more proactive and to try to reach the civilians and not wait for them to come seeking assistance or protection. On the other hand, we have the IDP issue and we have civilians waiting for protection from physical threats and for humanitarian assistance. That kind of situation is still a dilemma, even to the Mission, and has affected our priorities.

Our resources are obviously limited, compared with the reality on the ground. The 4.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance are also in need of protection. The issues of humanitarian assistance, life-saving assistance and the protection of civilians exist at the same time in South Sudan. There is also a geography issue and an infrastructure issue. In addition, we have the status of forces agreement issues. The option we have is to maximize the resources in hand for the Mission with regard to the status of forces agreement issue. That issue is causing a serious challenge to the Mission, including through the violations; restrictions on our patrols; our spending unnecessary time dealing with checkpoints; and the detainment of our contingent-owned equipment, sometimes for close to two months; and the difficulties of movement on the ground and by air. I want to be more clear: out of all the major challenges in South Sudan, the critical challenge is that the guns are not yet silent, and civilians are paying the price for that. We are doing our level best at the Mission through communication and physical deployment, but because of the lack of respect for the ceasefire agreement, we face significant challenges. What the civilian IDPs said in Malakal was that their priority was not positive peace, their priority was negative peace — to silence the guns under all circumstances.

The other issue concerns the limitations, in particular the force-multiplier capabilities. In addition to the status of forces agreement and the restrictions, I know from Headquarters that serious efforts have been made to engage the parties, but still we have a serious gap in capabilities. We depend too much on infantry. Aviation capabilities to control the security situation within our area of responsibility are still seriously lacking in UNMISS.

Another issue is the training gap. I tried to indicate that the technical and tactical training was there. I am happy with the commitment of the forces. I am happy with the technical and tactical skills. However, the protection of civilians is about serving and defending civilians. They should be our focus. I feel that there is a gap in terms of knowledge, preparation and skills. Within the forces, we are not yet aware of the particularity of protecting civilians and what makes it different from the general knowledge of

peacekeeping on the part of the soldier on the ground and the commander at the operational level. It is about civilians, about people and about going into the middle of the conflict. Obviously, there will be risks. I do not think that troops are adequately trained to know about the risks and that there is a solution to those risks. It is not just about risk, but paying the price for that risk and ensuring a solution.

I am happy to hear that it is a dual mission, defending yourself and defending civilians at the same time when it comes to the protection of civilians, because the nature of the conflict is not that predictable. When it threatens you and threatens civilians, it is not easy to predict. So it requires, I believe, knowledge, training and preparation, taking into consideration the particularities of the protection-of-civilians mandate and tasks. What is required is a force with a particular quality of commitment, one that is knowledgeable on how to be proactive and that more or less understands what to do in whatever the circumstances might be, because not everything can be controlled; not everything can be dealt with by saying, "Do this, do not do that". Tactical commanders are enablers themselves; so are are operational commanders. It is also a time-sensitive engagement. So with respect to the skill and knowledge of how to be proactive and how to take the initiative, always keeping in mind that the reason why we are there is to save civilians, I am not sure if this is fully included in our training systems, including before deployment.

So there are a few problems in this regard. With respect to my views on the issue of caveats, let me say that caveats exist, although some troop-contributing countries say that they do not have them. This shows that there are differences. A force is there for one mandate, one task, one vision, one area of operations. Division within a uniformed force is not good; it affects performance. In my understanding, addressing the concerns expressed is the solution, because we need a force that is not divided. This is in addition to the impact of operations.

Finally, in UNMISS, until recently we had the original mandate, and now we have a revised mandate. It is a shift that takes into consideration the realities on the ground and existing challenges. We have realigned ourselves with the support of Headquarters; that is why I am happy with the support and attention we receive, as well as its frequency. We have realigned ourselves decisively. We have completed the process of realigning ourselves with the new mandate and the new tasks; the Mission is trying to do its level best to adapt to the situation.

The President: I thank Lieutenant General Tesfamariam for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to Major General Lollesgaard to respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Major General Lollesgaard: Mr. President, I thank you for all the support from the members of the Council and for the questions posed; I will try to be brief in my responses.

First, with respect to the question posed by the representative of Chad, on how we can prevent asymmetric threats, I think that that is a very difficult question. I do not think that we are capable, with this mandate, of preventing it, but we can deter it through the effective use of our forces; with increased cooperation with Operation Barkhane, which is working in the area; and, of course, with the help of the local security forces from Mali. So that is what we will be stepping up after the signing of the peace agreement. I have given my guidance for the next quarter, and clearly the focus is on northern Mali.

I think that the issue regarding the intervention brigade is a very complex one, because we would step that up and then get the anti-terrorist mandate, which would make things extremely complicated for the Mission. I do not think we are set up for that or that we are ready for that. We do not have the intelligence, the equipment or the mobility to do that. I believe that having this mandate and having an intervention brigade under us would complicate things. So, again, I think that this issue need to be dealt with in closer cooperation with Barkhane and the security forces of Mali.

In terms of minimizing the risk, yes, we are doing that; we are doing everything we can. We are improving all of the bases now with a shorter timeline than originally envisaged. I am also happy to learn that Chad is bringing in more protective vehicles for their forces.

The representative of Chile asked a question about intelligence. I think that the sharing of intelligence is extremely important, and I look forward to the upcoming report on intelligence. Intelligence-sharing in United Nations missions is complicated. We know from previous experience that even in smaller alliances, intelligence-sharing is complicated, and it is even more complicated in the United Nations. I think we need

to find a good way to approach this issue, and I look forward to the report, which may be able to help us in that respect.

Has the availability of intelligence increased security? Yes, definitely. I can cite several situations in which we have saved lives by having good intelligence. I can also cite several cases in which we lost civilian lives because we did not have the necessary intelligence. I think, therefore, that we need to do more.

In answer to the United States representative's question on what we can do with respect to the issue of casualty evacuations, the answer is: more helicopters. That is quite easy. We are quite limited; we have limited night capability for casualty evacuations. In connection with the the issue of caveats, certain Member States now actually request that their forces be within a one-hour reach of a helicopter. This puts a lot of pressure on my helicopter capabilities before I can put certain troops on the ground. So, definitely, more helicopters with night capabilities is the best way of mitigating this issue.

To the representative of New Zealand, I would say a few things about the information campaign. I think that on the conceptual level and on the Force level, I am in a good position. With the assistance that I have now, the staff can provide me with the necessary input for my information operations. I need to train and teach within my organization; we are working on that, and I have asked a few experts to devise a concept for us. But I might come back, maybe, with additional requirements in that respect.

When it comes to the protection of vehicles, I have made it a rule in the Mission that we do not drive through a village without stopping and talking to civilians. This is a common operational tactic. This is very easy, because in Mali it always 100 kilometres to the nearest place; so you drive 100 kilometres and stop in the village and talk to the people. Then you drive another 100 kilometres and so on. This is a bit of an exaggeration, of course. But this is the way we are doing it, so as to get out of these armoured boxes.

In terms of the many issues relating to training, I think that we need to step up training. I think that the training programme provided by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is rather good, but perhaps we need to align it more with the thinking of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs). I think that we should also be more receptive of actually having evaluation teams coming into the TCCs to look at the final training and verify that it is scenario-based and also that we are taking the right approach and understand the environment in which we are going to work.

In response to the French representative, let me say that I will provide some lessons learned on what I believe my particular Mission needs in terms of training. We will develop that during the next couple of months, so that information will be shared with both the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries.

There are many questions on the issue of the caveats, and I asked what the Council could do. We need to encourage contributors not to set too many caveats. I understand, however, that there are national issues related to operations in such environments. I can live with caveats, as long as I know what they are and they do not come up the day after I have issued a task call. If they are fully clear and we know about them beforehand, we can work around them. Of course, it would be preferable if countries did not insist on caveats.

That was a quick run-through, although there is much more to say. Lunch hour is drawing near. I will conclude here on the lessons learned, and I fully agree with France. And I also apologize for my poor French, among other things, but I am trying to improve. That is also a lesson learned.

The President: I thank Major General Lollesgaard for the clarifications that he has provided.

I now give the floor to Major General Finn to respond to comments and questions raised.

Major General Finn: I thank you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Security Council for your statements and supportive comments. I think, in relation to the queries raised, that I can perhaps stay with them and make a few general comments, starting with the United States query regarding how troop-contributing countries notify us of their caveats. By the way, a caveat for myself is the Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), who is the operational commander in the Golan. I hope that I do not step on his toes in any way.

In relation to caveats, we should recall that UNDOF existed for many years in a very benign situation, with both parties to the agreement, Israel and Syria, largely abiding by the terms of the Disengagement Agreement, a situation that completely changed from 2012 to 2013. We had issues of observation posts being overrun, car-

jackings, observers — even UNDOF members — being detained for short periods, and deficiencies in medical evacuation and casualty evacuation. That was well described by the representative of New Zealand, which was one of the countries that imposed caveats, and has been raised by all the countries that have imposed caveats.

It is completely understood what drove the imposition of those restrictions. In short, UNDOF underwent a big reorganization, and by the end of 2013 and in early 2014, it had become a much more assertive force with a robust force reserve and capability. As mentioned by the representative of New Zealand, countries with UNDOF and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), have mitigated the problems to a large extent with better medical evacuation facilities, contingency planning, armoured vehicles, strict movement control and special surveillance, among other elements. The conditions were such that the Secretary-General in his reports to the Security Council was able to point out those mitigating measures and encourage troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to lift their caveats. There were also many briefings to TCCs by UNDOF and to UNTSO TCCs by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Thankfully, countries like New Zealand and many others did lift those caveats, but, as I said, there are still some that did not. With regard to how the caveats were reported, there were no major sudden notifications. They were done in a reasoned way, I think, through the Permanent Representatives to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The representative of Spain asked a question as to what extent we can still carry out our mandate. Observer Group Golan is doing that to the best of its ability, meeting the tasks set by the Force Commander of UNDOF. It is still manning observation points on the Alpha line, and it has taken up additional temporary observation posts — all of which, to some extent, fill the gaps created by having to leave the area of separation. In that regard, Observation Group Golan and UNDOF are well placed to continue to carry out the mandate as best as they can, within the constraints that currently exist, while not being able to position themselves within the area of separation to the extent that we would want.

I think that that more or less covers what I wanted to say in response.

The President: I thank Major General Finn for the information that he has provided.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous to respond to the comments.

Mr. Ladsous: The lunch hour is getting close, so I will be brief, but I would like to make a few comments on some of the issues discussed at length today.

First, on the protection of civilians, it is very much at the core of all our contemporary mandates, and we need to continue to do a better job of it. Of course, we cannot have a peacekeeper behind every citizen of the country concerned. We therefore have to manage expectations. At least, within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, we have put together an action plan for the next two years that places a very strong emphasis on training — a much more intensive effort — training that trains peacekeepers both prior to and immediately after deployment, so as to ensure that they are fully aware of what is expected of them.

In the light of that, it is important to recall that the protection of civilians is in the first instance the responsibility of the host State. If they cannot do it themselves, for any number of reasons, that should not impede the work that we are trying to do. In that connection, I ask the Council to consider South Sudan, a country where we felt that we needed to do a better job to protect civilians. We needed attack helicopters. That request was denied. We needed unarmed aerial vehicles. My request was denied personally three times by the President last year. We also required the ability to move around, the freedom of movement. That was denied. Not only did the Government deny us freedom of movement, but the Sudan did the same numerous times. If we factor into that the fact that Juba, for instance, declared members of our senior personnel personae non grata and that yesterday it was announced that from now on any United Nations personnel who took pictures would be considered spies, that raises a number of concerns. I wanted to highlight that problem.

On caveats, one has to be realistic. No one is questioning the legitimacy of a troop-contributng country having good reasons, which have to do with its sovereign rights, for imposing restrictions on the use of its personnel. I would nevertheless say thata we have to be made aware of those restrictions in advance. We cannot first find out about them at the moment when things take a turn for the worse. When the situation on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights became dangerous, some countries refused to remain there. That is of course their right and privilege. We cannot, however, tolerate what has happened in other theatres — including

South Sudan — where we discovered suddenly that a particular contingent was taking orders from its capital, circumventing the Force Commander and the entire chain of command. We cannot accept that, and if such a problem arises, we need, at the very least, to be aware. If the Force Commander can manage those caveats, that is fine, but we should try to avoid being put in a situation of fait accompli, ex post facto. If that does occur, my policy is clearly to send the contingent in question back home to its troop-contributing country, because we simply cannot rely on it.

I think that we must continue to do all we can to enhance the protection of the force. The safety and security of our peacekeepers is an absolute priority. General Lollesgaard enumerated a number of points that are being considered, including intelligence. The purpose of intelligence is to better protect our people, in addition to helping them do a better job. It all fits into the wider picture.

The representative of the United States raised the issue of medical evacuation. This is an area in which change is very rapid: for a long time we could rely on the concept of the "golden hour" in smaller theatres where facilities were available reasonably quickly and the force was relatively compact. Nowadays, we need much more mobility and there is more fractioning of contingents. When one battalion is spread across five, six or seven positions, as happens in the Central African Republic, for instance, we need to factor in the medical element at the level of the basic unit, which means level-1 facilities in every deployment, if possible. The more contemporary 10-1-2 guideline is the way forward, but it requires not only medical means but also helicopters with night-flying capabilities and, once again, the consent of the host Government. Not so long ago, in the Sudan, a peacekeeper died of his wounds because the request for a helicopter flight to pick him up was refused.

In terms of more generic messages, General Maqsood Ahmed, the Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, and I have decided to emphasize performance at this year's conference of chiefs of military components, even more than in previous years, because that is the expectation of the Security Council and the membership of the United Nations, and we must continue to do better.

With regard to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, I completely agree that any act of sexual misconduct is unacceptable and that one act is too many. A zero-tolerance approach is required from all concerned, not only the Secretariat but also the Member States. It was, after all, the Member States that decided to retain the capacity to prosecute and ultimately pass judgment on those responsible for such terrible acts. We must all do our duty in that regard and must not forget the problem of the victims, who must be helped. We are working on the matter.

As the generals present today know, military capability is about leadership, and all of them are displaying that quality. I want to thank them for that and tell them that we and the Security Council stand by their side, as reflected in today's debate.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladsous for the clarifications he has provided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.